

FRANK READE

WEEKLY MAGAZINE,

Containing Stories of Adventures on Land, Sea & in the Air.

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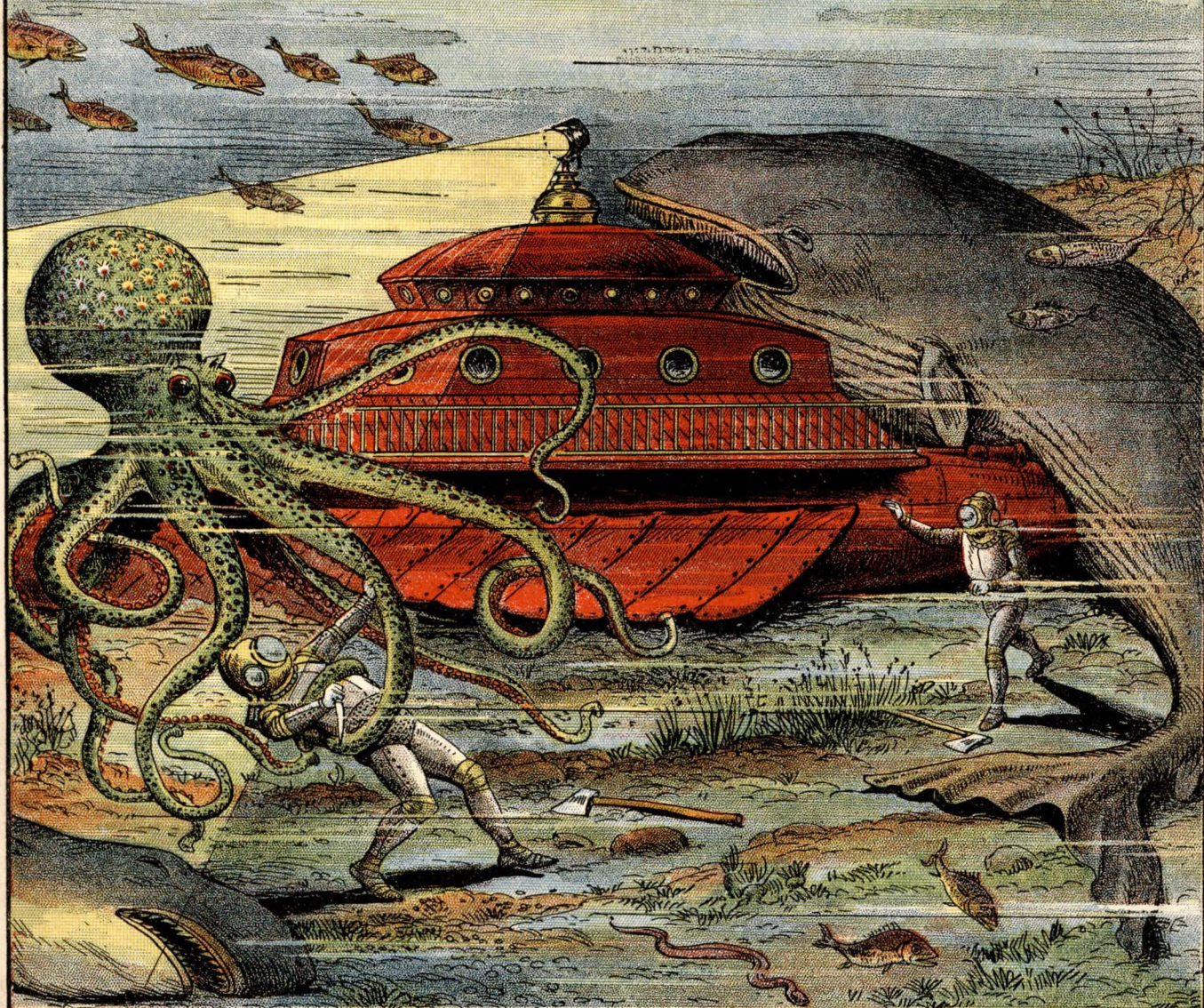
No. 8.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 19, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

FRANK READE, JR.'S DEEP SEA DIVER THE "TORTOISE" OR, THE SEARCH FOR A SUNKEN ISLAND.

By "NOMAME."



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Frank Reade, Jr.'s Deep Sea Diver, The "Tortoise"

OR,

THE SEARCH FOR A SUNKEN ISLAND.

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CHAPTER I.

A STORY OF THE DEEP.

On the 19th of May, 18—, the maritime records of New York showed an entry from the log of a South Sea trading vessel, which was at the time of much interest as well as wonderment to mariners and geographers.

This was as follows:

"On board ship Thespian, Captain Amos Bailey, Borneo for New York, sighted an island in latitude 10 degrees 61 minutes south, west longitude 140 degrees 7 minutes 10 seconds, appearing to be an atoll. Lay to to go ashore for water. Just as the ship's boat was lowered there was a tremendous upheaval, like a tidal wave, the boat was stove and two men were lost, the ship laying upon her beam ends. Believed to be an earthquake or some convulsion of nature which destroyed the island, for it was found no more. It is believed that the island sank. Deep sea soundings were taken, but the water was so deep that no bottom could be reported. The island upon the chart is marked as Carter's Reef. Captain Bailey made an entry of the occurrence in his log, and it goes upon record."

This report at the time created some sensation. But the story attached to it was so strange and wonderful that the marine world was agog with interest, and there was much talk of sending a scientific expedition thither.

The reason for this was that as the Thespian was making soundings for the sunken island an overturned coracle was discovered floating upon the waves.

To this there clung a white sailor, the only survivor of the terrible earthquake. He was picked up nearly dead from the shock and being so long in the water.

His story was a thrilling one as rendered to Captain Bailey.

He gave his name as George Vane, a castaway from the ship Verda, wrecked in a typhoon. For six years he had dwelt upon Carter's Reef, a veritable Robinson Crusoe. He lived upon shell-fish, bird's eggs, and a few wild goats which were upon the island.

Six years he passed in watching for a passing ship. In this time he had become familiar with every foot of the island.

Before he had been many months in the atoll, he discovered a beautiful coral cave extending far down into the reef.

Upon exploring this what was his amazement to discover a vast pirate's treasure there stored.

There were chests and casks of all sorts filled with gold coin and silver and precious jewels.

The fortune there secreted, as near as he could estimate, would approximate fully the value of a million dollars.

Vane nearly went crazy over the discovery.

From that hour he would spend all his spare time watching for a passing ship.

It was his one hope to get his treasure home, and it would consummate the dream of wealth of a lifetime.

Certainly he was justified in this, for the love of gold is inherent in the nature of man.

But the weary years passed, and yet no ship came near the atoll.

White sails passed on the horizon, but his signals were unseen. Yet the patient watcher clung to hope.

Then the Thespian came, and it seemed as if she meant to land at the island.

She did not see his excited signals, and at length, fearful that he would lose this chance of getting back to civilization, Vane put out from the island in a small coracle which he had made himself.

In this he was making for the Thespian, when the island disappeared into the sea.

The coracle was overturned, and Vane was nearly drowned. When picked up by the Thespian he was half delirious.

His wonderful tale excited the crew of the Thespian.

But nothing could be done.

The pirates' treasure was at the bottom of the ocean, and there seemed no logical way at hand of reclaiming it. The island had sunk too deep to admit of the ordinary diver going down to it.

For a day or two the Thespian cruised about in the vicinity.

But as the atoll showed no signs of making a reappearance, the ship sailed away, homeward bound.

Before New York was reached Vane died of ship fever.

But his deposition was put on record and excited much comment.

This little anecdote is here given to prepare the reader for what is coming. Let us now give an incident which amply illustrates the truth of the saying that very important events oftentimes hinges upon most trivial of circumstances.

One day an enterprising reporter of a leading New York daily was looking over the maritime records and came across the account of the Sunken Island.

At once he eagerly seized upon it as a good subject for a newspaper story.

Accordingly it was served up with the usual vividness and embellishment and given to the public.

A gentleman sitting in the reading-room of the Palmer House in Chicago, glancing over the columns of the paper, read the story.

He was a young man with clear-cut features and wonderfully bright, keen eyes. There was a distinguished air about him which established the fact that he was out of the ordinary.

He read the reporter's glowing account with interest and what appeared to be deep astonishment.

Then he turned to the white-bearded old gentleman who occupied a chair near him and asked:

"I say, Captain Bailey, has this account any reference to you? I know you were captain of a ship called the Thespian."

"Certainly I was," replied the elderly gentleman, whose very appearance betokened him a retired sea-captain.

"That is what I thought. Then this must concern you."

"What is it?"

The young man gave him the paper.

Captain Bailey glanced over it and gave a great start.

"Why, upon my word, it is every bit the truth."

"What!" exclaimed the young man; "you don't mean to say that that island actually sank in that latitude with that treasure cave and all?"

"Yes, I do," replied the captain, emphatically. "I believe Vane told the truth."

"Whew!"

The young man got up and walked back and forth excitedly.

"Well, Mr. Frank Reade, Jr.," said the old captain, watching him, "why are you so stirred up about the matter?"

Frank Reade, Jr., for that was the young man's name, paused and gazed keenly at the old sea captain.

"I hope there is no jest about this, captain. Is there really a sunken island with that amount of treasure in that latitude?"

The captain nodded.

"It's the truth," he said.

Frank Reade, Jr., drew a deep breath. His whole manner was indicative of great animal force and personal magnetism as well as brain power.

In all the world there was, at that moment, not to be found a more talented or distinguished character.

Frank Reade, Jr., was known the world over as the famous inventor of many wonderful machines in the line of steam and electricity.

In all the United States there was no more thriving and attractive town than Readestown.

It was there that the extensive shops for the construction of Frank Reade, Jr.'s inventions were located.

"Well," said the young inventor, after a pause, "you no doubt wonder at my excited manner, Captain Bailey!"

"Well, yes, it is a little curious," replied the retired sea captain.

"I will explain to you. I have been looking for an opportunity of this kind for some time past. I have the means for rescuing that treasure from its watery resting place."

Captain Bailey was more than surprised.

He gazed at the young inventor a moment as if he could not believe his senses.

"Great Whales!" he gasped. "What are you spouting about, mate?"

"I mean just what I say," replied the young inventor, imperturbably.

"You mean to say that you can really recover that treasure?"

"I do."

"But how, may I ask?"

"Certainly. I have an invention just finished which will do it."

The old captain scratched his head.

"Well," he sputtered; "I'd like to ask what kind of a mighty invention that might be?"

"Certainly," replied Frank, coolly. "It is my new submarine vessel, the Tortoise, or my Deep Sea Diver, as I call it."

"Deep Sea Diver," repeated the captain. "A submarine boat?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll be cut up for a Turk! I never heard the likes of that before. Why, blow it, man, that island is as much as a mile under water."

"I don't care how deep it is," replied the young inventor, coolly. "I mean to recover that pirate treasure."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"When will you start?"

"Just as soon as you promise me one thing."

"What is that?"

"That you will go along with me, and give me all necessary advice in regard to the locality."

The captain sank back in his chair and shook his head.

"Ah, lad," he said, sadly, "I've taken my last voyage. I'm an old hulk now, and laid up for old rubbish."

"You shall not say that, Captain Bailey!" cried Frank,

impulsively. "But do not give me your answer now. Think it over for a few days. In the meantime I give you my earnest invitation to accompany me to Readestown upon a little visit, and I will show you my new submarine invention."

The old captain's face flushed with pleasure.

"Of course I'll go, mate!" he cried, heartily; "and I'd right willingly go with you on the cruise if I did not fear that an old hulk like me would be more of a detriment to you than any service."

"Not a bit of it," cried Frank Reade, Jr., heartily.

Then he turned to the comical-looking dorky who lay coiled up in a chair near.

"Pomp!"

"Yas, sah! Wha' yo' hab, sah?"

"Have my luggage sent to the depot. Get my effects together, hunt up Barney, and both of you be ready to leave on the evening train for Readestown."

"All right, sah," and away went Pomp, one of the inventor's faithful servitors.

CHAPTER II.

AT SEA WITH THE TORTOISE.

That evening train took the quartette, Captain Bailey, Frank Reade, Jr., and his two servants, Barney and Pomp, out of Chicago.

Barney was a sawed off specimen of the genuine Celt, as faithful as could be, and as full of Irish wit as a nut is of meat.

The negro and the Irishman were the best of friends, though fond of playing practical jokes upon one another.

They had accompanied Frank Reade, Jr., upon all his famous trips around the globe.

Indeed, their services were quite indispensable to the young inventor, who valued them highly.

Moreover, they were accomplished in many things.

Pomp was an expert electrician, as well as a good cook, and Barney was a skilled mechanic.

These arts had been taught them by Frank Reade, Jr.

In due time Readestown was reached.

Frank at once drove to the works in his carriage with Captain Bailey.

Entering his private office, the young inventor lost no time in at once showing his guest the plans of his invention.

These he described at length, and then said:

"Now you can see the feasibility of the invention, captain."

"I can."

"Well, now come with me into the store-room and I will show you the boat."

The captain followed Frank through a door and a passageway, and quickly stood in a mighty, high-roofed chamber.

In the center of the chamber was an immense tank, into which the water was admitted through a canal connecting with the river.

In this tank floated the strangest-looking craft, as Captain Bailey was bound to admit, that he had ever seen.

It was made of the toughest and lightest steel, the hull being long and rakish, with a ram-like bow.

The deck was low, and guarded by a rail which extended from stem to stern.

From the deck there was built a structure with a sloping roof, smooth and strongly plated, not unlike the back of a turtle. Above this was placed a protected globe containing an electric light of great power.

In the side of the turtle back superstructure there were bull's-eye windows, into which were fitted the strongest of glass.

"You will see the object of the boat," said Frank Reade, Jr., explanatively. "This turtle back is strongly constructed, and capable of supporting a tremendous pressure. Indeed, it would seem almost impossible to crush it."

"What is the advantage of that?" asked Captain Bailey.

"The advantage is very great, indeed. An ordinary submarine boat could not descend to the depths that the Tortoise could without being crushed."

"Ah, I see."

"These turtle back roofs are supported by the strongest of steel plates, and the surface being so equalized that it is able to stand the great pressure. Now let us take a look inside."

In the side of the submarine boat there was a large door.

This opened and shut by means of a slide, which Frank explained was one of his inventions.

Passing through this door, they were in a small vestibule.

"This vestibule," said Frank, "is so arranged that when the ship is under water, we can simply step into this vestibule from the cabin, with a diving-suit, close the watertight door, and by filling the vestibule with water, open the outer door and walk out. When we want to return, we walk into the vestibule, close the outer door, and turn a valve which operates a pump, which soon takes the water out. Do you see the idea?"

"Then you have diving-suits with which you can leave the ship?"

"Oh, yes; they are of my own invention, and I make no use of an air-pump or life-line."

"How do you do that?"

"Simply by means of a reservoir of compressed air, carried upon the back, and which is regularly admitted to the helmet, secured again, and oxygenized by means of a chemical, and returned to the reservoir, to be used over again indefinitely."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Captain Bailey, with sincerity. "Truly, Mr. Reade, you are, indeed, the most wonderful inventor on the earth."

"You do me too much honor," said Frank, with a laugh; "but come, let me show you the appointments of the interior."

Passing through the vestibule they entered the main cabin of the ship.

This was most luxuriously furnished.

The carpets were of the finest velvet, the walls hung with tapestry, and the furniture of the latest pattern.

A spiral stairway led to the upper tower or pilot-house.

Here were the electrical apparatus and machinery of the boat.

They were inspected duly, and then the captain asked:

"But how do you make your boat rise or sink in the water, Mr. Reade?"

"Ah, I will explain that to you," said Frank. "Step this way."

They passed down a narrow staircase which seemed to lead into the hold.

But it brought them to a large compartment in the stern of the boat which held several huge tanks.

"Those," said Frank, "are the air chambers. Fill those with water, which can be done almost instantly by means of pressure, and the boat will sink. Then, when the boat is desired to rise, I simply exhaust the tanks by means of powerful pressure. The boat then will go to the surface like a cork."

"Good enough!" cried the captain, with delight. "Then you think, Mr. Reade, that the Tortoise can descend to any depth with safety?"

"I know it," replied Frank, confidently.

"Well, I can only say that I'm mightily pleased with the craft, and to take a trip with you aboard her will please me much."

"We shall hope before we return," said Frank, "to bring back the treasure of the sunken island."

"There is little doubt but that we shall succeed," declared the old sea captain.

This ended the inspection of the Tortoise.

A stateroom was set aside for the captain's use, and he had his effects sent to it that day from the hotel.

It required some time to put stores and necessary equipments aboard the Tortoise.

But this was accomplished in time, and it was finally declared that the ship was all ready for the sea.

All over the country the news had spread that Frank Reade, Jr.'s new invention, the Tortoise, was to go upon an expedition to the South Seas.

As a result, a great crowd congregated at the river bank upon the day announced for the departure.

Exactly at the hour appointed by Frank, the Tortoise floated from the tank into the canal and thence into the river.

As the Tortoise appeared in the river, a great cheer went up from the crowd.

Frank and Captain Bailey stood upon the deck and waved flags.

Bands played, salutes were fired, and thus the Tortoise started triumphantly on her journey.

But few that saw the submarine boat sail down the river that day realized what thrilling adventures the voyagers were to experience before they saw home again.

Barney and Pomp were in the pilot-house and kept the boat steady on her course down the river.

At length Readestown passed from view and the journey was begun in earnest.

In due course of time the submarine boat had reached the ocean.

The Tortoise proved what Frank had hoped for in the most sanguine way.

She was light and buoyant in the water, a good sea boat and a fast sailer.

When well out to sea Frank experimented upon sinking and raising her, and found that she was truly what he had christened her, a deep sea diver.

Captain Bailey was delighted beyond expression with the unique craft.

"It beats anything I ever saw!" he declared. "I think there will be a revolution in ship-building in a very few years, Mr. Reade, owing to your genius."

"That is, if others learn the secret of my boat," laughed Frank.

"Is there a secret about it?"

"Why, certainly."

The captain looked puzzled.

"But I have not seen it," he declared; "the principle you have explained to me."

"Very true," replied Frank; "but the secret consists in the equalizing of the parts, and the construction of a vessel

buoyant enough to answer the purpose. Anybody can construct a submarine boat, but when it is done, how will they sink or raise it? Moreover, what will they do for air underneath the surface?"

"Why, do as you have done."

"Ah! but you will find that not so easy. My submarine boats are the only ones that have succeeded."

"That is true."

"I alone have the secret of manufacturing air under water. You will experience no more inconvenience in breathing when the ship is under water than when above. The reason for this I can very quickly give you. There is a series of pipes running through the boat which continually disburse manufactured air while under water."

Captain Bailey drew a deep breath.

"I can see it all now," he declared; "but will you always keep your secret?"

"I would be foolish if I did not," replied Frank, with a laugh.

"Indeed you would."

Captain Bailey now went up in the pilot-house tower, where were Barney and Pomp.

From this position a splendid view of the sea was to be had upon all sides.

Barney and Pomp were having a jolly time all by themselves.

Barney was a fine singer, and possessed a fine violin which was as dear to him as his own life, if he was to be believed.

"Shure, it's the same fiddle as the O'Sheas have used at dances in ould Clonokitty for many and many a generation," he declared. "I'd lose me luck av I lost that!"

He could play most bewitchingly upon it, too.

On the other hand, Pomp was the owner of a fine banjo. It was good fun, indeed, to get the two together and listen to their quaint songs.

They were tuning up now, just as Captain Bailey appeared.

"Avast, there, ye lubbers!" he cried, in quarter-deck style. "Who's to watch for squalls when the crew's at play?"

"Begorra, I kin play the fiddle an' have me eye on the squalls all at the same toime!" cried Barney.

Then he drew his bow across the strings and began a real Irish jig.

This was more than Pomp could stand.

The darky accordingly sprang to his feet and began a lively dance.

It was a genuine Virginia breakdown, and the faster Barney manipulated the bow the faster Pomp danced.

"Whurroo!" roared Barney. "Go it, ye black divil. May the fairies take ye!"

"Golly!" cried Pomp, turning a handspring. "If yo' don' gib dis chile a chance fo' his breff, I'ish, I'se done gwine to break de flo' down!"

Captain Bailey laughed until he was apoplectic. But right in the midst of the jollification there came an astounding surprise.

There was a sudden terrific shock which knocked everybody down.

CHAPTER III.

THE WHALE.

Pomp, mixing his legs, went down upon his head.

This was lucky for him, for if he had fallen upon any other part of his anatomy, he would have been badly hurt.

Barney was pitched, fiddle and all, against the pilot-house window.

Captain Bailey went tumbling down the stairs.

"Golly! Golly!" yelled Pomp. "Lor' sabe dis chile! I'se gwine to glory!"

"Begorra, it's the worruld comin' to an ind!" yelled Barney. "Shure, it's kilt I am!"

"Great barnacles!" roared Captain Bailey. "What struck us? I'll take my 'davy it's a rip-tearin' tornado!"

But up from the cabin came Frank Reade, Jr.'s, voice:

"Ho! Barney and Pomp, turn Lever No. 6 and come down here at once."

The young inventor's tone was one of peremptory command.

The two servitors knew better than to disregard it.

"A'right, Marse Frank!" replied Pomp.

"Bejabers, it's comin' I am, sor!" returned Barney.

Then down the stairway they piled.

But Captain Bailey had preceded them.

The ship was rocking violently, and seemed every moment about to capsize.

Frank was in the lower cabin, and was engaged in putting on his diving suit. He was very much excited.

"W-what on earth is the matter, Frank?" asked the captain.

"Look out of the forward deadeye there and you'll see," replied Frank.

The captain did as he was bid and beheld, indeed, a startling sight.

The bow of the boat terminated in a sharp ram, and this had struck a whale broadside.

The ram had transfixed the monster cetacean like a frog upon a spit.

The whale, however, in its dying agonies, was thrashing about furiously and dyeing the water with its blood.

Its convulsions threatened to strain the Tortoise and do it much harm.

Something must be done, and immediately, or there was great danger that the submarine boat would founder.

"Golly sakes, Marse Frank!" cried Pomp. "What am we gwine to do?"

"Begorra, it's a whale, an' I'm thinkin' he'll sink the ship!" spluttered Barney.

"Easy, lads!" cried the old captain. "Why not back water, Mr. Reade?"

"The ram will hold the whale in spite of that!" said Frank.

"Then what will you do?"

"Sink the boat."

Frank stepped to a lever on the table and switched it.

Instantly the submarine boat sank beneath the water, carrying the whale down with it.

For an instant all was darkness in the cabin.

Then Frank touched another lever, which set all the electric lamps ablaze.

And the searchlight being turned upon the bow, showed the whale being carried down with the boat.

The huge monster had ceased to struggle now and was evidently dead.

All danger was now passed, but the question yet remained as to how to free the ship of its incubus.

The submarine boat now rested on the bottom of the sea.

Frank now had his diving-suit on, and said to Barney:

"Put on your suit, Barney. I want you to go with me."

This pleased the Celt only too well.

"All roight, sor!" he cried, heartily. "Shure, it's mesilf as will be wid yez."

He was quickly in his diving-suit.

The lights from the Tortoise showed the bed of the ocean plainly for a great distance around.

It was a wonderful and enchanting sight.

The smooth white sands were broken here and there with rocks strewn with seaweeds and filled with beautiful shells.

Frank touched a latticed screen, which opened a large expanse of heavy plate glass in the side of the boat.

One sitting in the cabin could gaze with ease out upon the wonders of the mighty deep.

Beautiful fishes and habitues of the deep sea came pressing their noses against the glass.

They were magnified to twice their natural size by the glass.

Hideous-looking monsters hovered in the gloom far be-

yond devil-fishes and octopus, none of them venturing in the glare of light.

Captain Bailey was delighted with the sight.

He sat near the glass window and studied the scene.

"It beats the world!" he declared. "Why, I wouldn't miss the sight for a fortune."

Frank and Barney now left the boat and walked out upon the bed of the ocean with their diving-suits on.

Captain Bailey watched them with great interest.

"Great gunwales!" he exclaimed; "I wouldn't believe that possible. This is like a scene from the Arabian Nights."

Indeed, the bluff captain was right.

Frank and Barney were armed with axes and knives with which to cut away the whale's body.

They reached the bow of the Tortoise, and Frank made a superficial examination of the position of the cetacean.

By placing their helmets close together and shouting, the two divers could make each other heard.

"Begin work here, Barney," Frank directed, "I will go around on the opposite side."

"All roight, sor."

Barney mounted the ram and began to cut away the whale's carcass.

It was slow work.

Frank began on the opposite side.

But finally the soft blubber was cut away and the ram cleared.

The carcass of the dead whale lay now clear of the ram.

But the blood had evidently been scented by fish of prey far and near, for no sooner had the job been accomplished when Barney gave a great cry.

"Look out, Misther Frank!"

But he was too far away for the young inventor to hear.

Down from above came a huge shark.

The monster made a lightning dive for Frank.

In another moment he would have struck him but for Barney's quick action.

The Irishman sprang forward and gave Frank a tremendous push.

The young inventor went tumbling down into the sands and the shark's tail struck Barney and knocked him in an opposite direction.

Neither, however, were badly hurt, though it was a close call for Frank.

In an instant both were upon their feet. But this was to see the shark coming for them again.

Captain Bailey aboard the Tortoise had seen the danger of his companions, and was terribly excited.

"My soul!" he cried, "that shark will get one or the other as sure as you live. What can we do?"

This was a question not easily answered.

"Golly fo' glory!" screamed Pomp. "Dey's gwine fo' to get eat up fo' sho'!"

But both Frank and Barney this time saw the shark coming.

There was no possible chance to get on board the Tortoise before he should reach them.

Frank saw this.

It was a trying moment.

But the young inventor never lost his nerve.

He drew his long-bladed knife and crouched down awaiting the attack of the shark.

It came like a flash

The huge fish made straight for him. It was evident that this time it meant to finish him.

But Frank did not mean to succumb in that manner.

Just as the shark was almost upon him quick as a flash he dropped.

The shark's belly grazed him, crushing him down upon the carcass of the whale.

But the knife in Frank's hand traversed the entire length of the shark's belly, and literally disemboweled the monster.

The huge fish turned upon its back and sank a dozen yards beyond.

For a moment the water was so thick with blood that Frank was unable to tell what he was about.

But presently this cleared, and then the young inventor saw Barney coming toward him.

The Celt placed his helmet close to Frank's.

"Shure, sor, an' I think we had better be movin' out av here, sor."

"Yes," returned Frank. "Make for the vestibule, Barney."

The Celt started.

But he stopped almost as quickly with a cry of horror.

Through the blood-obscured water there came a powerful set of long, sinuous arms which almost instantly enfolded Frank Reade, Jr.

The young inventor was like a flash swept away and out of sight.

Barney stood like one overcome with awful horror.

Then he started in pursuit.

But the water cleared, and he could see nothing of Frank Reade or his captor, which he knew to be a monster octopus.

As far as Barney could see in the ocean depths there was no trace of Frank or the octopus.

The monster had evidently made good its escape to a safe

distance with its prey. The horror of the faithful Irishman can well be imagined.

There would have been no hesitation about his going to Frank's relief, but he knew not in which direction to go.

What should he do?

The Celt was in an agony of terror and doubt.

He went as far as he dared from the submarine ship in the direction which he believed the monster had dragged Frank away.

Then, a school of sharks appearing, he was obliged to beat a retreat.

The poor Irishman was beside himself.

"Shure, phwativer shall I do?" he wailed. "Misther Frank has gone to his death, I'm shure!"

In his extremity he rushed into the vestibule of the boat.

He closed the door, and in a few moments the water was pumped out of the place.

He then staggered into the cabin, and was received by Captain Bailey and Pomp.

"Och hone, it's the lasht av Misther Frank!" cried the agonized Celt. "Shure, he's kilt, bad luck to the bloody crayther what tuk him away!"

"Fo' de Lor' sakes, don' yo' say dat, chile!" cried Pomp. "I done fink we neber gib Marse Frank up!"

"It is possible that he may have successfully fought the octopus," cried Captain Bailey; "but we ought to go to his aid."

"Shure, sor, an' in phwat direction wud yez go?" cried Barney.

"I don't know."

"Nayther do I, sor, an' if any wan cud tell me, shure, I'd do anythin' fer him. Och hone! it's a broth av a bye he was, an' him now dead!"

But Pomp was aroused.

"I done fink de cap'en will stay wif de boat, I'ish!" he cried, "an' yo' an' I will go after Marse Frank!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEARCH.

"Of course I will," cried Captain Bailey. "And may you have good luck."

"Phwat's that, naygur?" asked Barney.

"Don' ax no questions, chile. I'se gwine wif yo' to fin' Marse Frank."

"Good fer yez, naygur!" cried Barney. "Shure, it's reddy I am."

"An I'll jes' be ready in one minit, I'ish."

Pomp was as good as his word.

It hardly required a minute for him to get into his diving-suit.

Then both entered the vestibule.

Captain Bailey was to keep watch and if anything happened he was to give such assistance as he could.

This time Barney and Pomp provided themselves with long pike poles.

These were armed with sharp blades at the end for the purpose of disemboweling any voracious shark which should chance to come their way.

Thus equipped they left the submarine boat on their perilous mission.

That it was a perilous one both well knew.

The chances were that they might never return to the Tortoise.

That they would succeed in finding Frank Reade, Jr., both knew to be almost hopeless.

Yet they were determined to sell their lives in the attempt.

They were intensely devoted to their gifted young master, and being brave fellows, both of them, they would not hesitate a moment to die in his behalf.

Leaving the Tortoise, they made their way slowly over the sandy bed of the ocean.

As a precaution, should they get beyond the range of light from the Tortoise and lose their way, Pomp carried a small wire, which unrolled from a spool aboard the ship as fast as they went on.

By this they would be enabled to find their way back to the Tortoise.

There was a large gang of sharks feeding on the carcass of the whale.

Barney and Pomp gave them a wide berth, and, fortunately, were not molested by them.

They started boldly into the dark waters beyond.

The bed of the ocean now began to undergo a change.

Instead of the clean white sand there were rocks and crags and yawning abysses.

Frank, if dragged down into one of these terrible places, would probably never escape alive.

Pomp put his helmet close to Barney's and shouted:

"Wha' yo' fink, I'ish? Am dis a likely place fo' de octopus to carry Marse Frank?"

"Begorra, I think it is, naygur!" replied Barney. "An' shure if Misther Frank is down in that hole, I'd niver hope to see him up again."

"Golly, dat am so!"

"Begorra, I'm afraid we'll niver see Mистер Frank again."

"Dis chile neber gib him up."

"Whurroo! What do yez call that?"

What seemed like a black cloud now came drifting through the water.

The two divers were for a moment nonplused.

Then Barney remembered that the octopus always throws out just such an inky cloud upon approach.

He put his helmet close to Pomp's and shouted:

"Look out fer yersilf! The omadhoun is a-comin'!"

The next moment the inky cloud was all about them.

The electric lamps in their helmets were not strong enough to penetrate the gloom.

But in a few moments the inky cloud was gone.

The two divers stood upon the verge of the abyss, but not a sign of the octopus could be seen.

"Bejabers, that's quare!" muttered Barney. "Phwere is the baste?"

The Celt cautiously got down upon his knees and peered over the edge.

But he could see nothing in the gloom.

One singular fact was noticeable, however. In the vicinity there was not to be seen a living creature of any kind.

All evidence of marine life, which was so plentiful a short distance away, was lacking here.

The myriads of fish and crustaceans which swarmed the ocean depths were not to be found about this dark hole.

It was prima-facie evidence that some mighty danger was here concealed—that some monster here lurked.

All this drifted through Barney's very astute mind.

Then he picked up a rock and tried to hurl it down into the abyss. This had no effect, however.

Barney put his helmet against Pomp's and shouted:

"Phwat do yez think av it, naygur?"

The darky replied:

"I done fin' dat Marse Frank hab been carried down into dat drefful place."

"Thin, bejabers, it's the ind av him!"

"Yo' am right."

"Phwat shall we do?"

"I done fink we hab to gib it up, I'ish."

For a moment the two faithful servitors stood in uncertainty upon the verge of the abyss. Then a startling thing happened.

Suddenly Barney gave a move to the left.

He stepped upon a spongy yielding mass which seemed partly imbedded in the white sand.

It yielded, and in such a life-like manner that the Celt flashed his electric light down upon it.

"Tare an' 'ounds!" he gasped, "phwat the devil am I doing av?"

It was easy to see that the spongy mass was the tentacles of a mighty devil-fish.

Before Barney could make a further move, up flashed the mighty arm, and was about his body as quick as a flash.

He was lifted up bodily, and at the same moment up from the black abyss there arose a terrible apparition of beak-like jaws and horrible staring eyes.

The devil-fish had seized Barney, and was rising from its lair to make a meal upon its intended victim.

It was an awful moment for the two horrified divers.

"Och hone, it's kilt I am!" wailed Barney, with awful horror.

Had he been less brave and determined he would have fainted away upon the spot.

But with that courage which was inherent in his nature, he began to fight the foe.

With his knife he began slashing at the huge tentacles which held him so tightly.

The blood spurted out furiously from the wounds, and the huge tentacle began to weaken its hold.

Barney realized this, and imbued with sudden hope, slashed away.

Pomp came to his aid.

"Golly! gib it to de critter!" cried the darky, excitedly. "I done fink he hab Marse Frank now in his belly, but he don' hab dis chile!"

Of course Barney could not hear this exclamation, but he saw the darky coming to his aid and gained new hope.

The octopus' tentacle was nearly severed, and Barney was almost free, when suddenly up stole another wriggling arm.

This embraced Pomp, and the darky found himself being drawn toward the ravenous beak of the monster.

But Barney was now released and flew to Pomp's aid.

Both went to slashing this tentacle furiously. There was not a moment to lose.

Once Pomp was within a few feet of the deadly jaws.

Only a desperate struggle enabled him to escape them.

Barney, with a last vigorous slash, cut off the monster's tentacle, and Pomp was free.

Both got out of the monster's way as quickly as possible.

The octopus sank back into the dark abyss and out of sight.

The two divers were completely exhausted with their strenuous efforts. Pomp put his helmet close to Barney's, and cried:

"Fo' de Lor', I'ish, I don' fink we hab to gib it up. I reckon we bettah return to the submarine boat."

The darky was in earnest in what he said. Barney nodded his head.

"Begorra, thin yez don't belave that we kin foind Misther Frank?"

"Pon mah word, I'ish, I don' fink we can."

"All right," replied Barney, "thin it's back to the Tortoise we'll be afther goin'."

Both turned away with sad hearts.

It was hard, indeed, to give up all hope of ever seeing their young master alive again.

Yet it was plain that they must do so. There was hardly a particle of doubt but that Frank Reade, Jr., had met his fate.

Accordingly, Pomp turned to look for the wire by which they hoped to find their way back.

To his horror he could not find it.

In his battle with the octopus it had become detached from his wrist, and now the most persistent of search failed to find it.

The two divers were aghost.

It was almost impossible for them to find their way back to the Tortoise without the wire.

What was to be done?

The electric lamps upon their helmets would illuminate the vicinity for several feet. But they were far beyond the range of the lights of the Tortoise.

It was a horrible thought.

They were adrift at the bottom of the boundless Atlantic.

Of course as long as the chemical air lasted they would be safe, and could wander about in their quest.

But when they came to reflect upon the possibility of finding the Tortoise in that mighty waste, it was an appalling thing to consider.

It seemed like looking for a needle in a million haystacks without the least particle of chance of success.

The two divers stood for a moment looking at each other through the visors of their helmets.

Then an idea occurred to Pomp.

He went down on his knees and began looking for their footprints made in coming hither.

But this proved a failure.

The action of the water had entirely effaced them. The trail was buried. Another prop was knocked out from under them.

It was an awful ghastly reflection that they were lost at the bottom of the Atlantic. Pomp was the most philosophical.

"Well, I'ish," he said to Barney, "we'se dead suah fo' to jine Marse Frank if he dies now, ain't we?"

"Begorra, but it's mesilf as don't want to die, at all, at all!" retorted Barney. "Shure, loife is good enough fer me."

But something must be done.

They could not remain where they were forever. Finally it occurred to Barney to strike out in a given direction and mark their course with little piles of shells and stones at alternate intervals. This was done.

In this manner they kept on for some way, when suddenly a black object loomed up before them in the gloom.

Drawing nearer they saw that it was the hull of a sunken ship, long buried beneath the sea and gone to decay. A great surprise was in store for them.

CHAPTER V.

FRANK'S ADVENTURES.

But what of Frank Reade, Jr.?

Had he really gone to his death in the arms of the deadly and ravenous octopus? If such had been the case we would have been compelled to terminate our story here.

Fate had in store a kinder fate for the young inventor.

To be sure the peril which threatened him was of a most deadly kind.

For a time it looked as if he must really succumb to the monster in whose embrace he was.

The tentacle of the octopus was wound tightly about him.

The monster was making lightning-like progress through the water.

Before Frank had hardly time to act he was whisked out of sight of the lights of the Tortoise.

Meanwhile he was hacking away at the tentacle of the octopus with his knife and with good effect.

The monster's flesh cut like cheese, and it required not many well-directed blows to sever the huge arm.

The creature seemed convulsed with pain, and went wriggling away over the bottom of the ocean without trying to seize its intended prey again.

Frank quickly released himself from the dead tentacles and then began to look about him.

He was not injured at all by his experience, but a thrilling realization dawned upon him.

He was out of sight and sound of the Tortoise. How was he to find his way back?

It was a stupendous problem.

For a moment he stood aghast.

Of course there was the chance of proceeding directly to the boat in all safety; but there were many chances against the success of such a move.

What was to be done?

In all his life, Frank Reade, Jr., had never faced such a problem. He felt weak and faint for a moment.

"My God!" he moaned, "I am lost—lost at the bottom of the sea!"

But he was not one to long give up to despair.

He made a careful estimate of the distance he had been carried, and of the direction from which he had come.

Then he set out in quest of the Tortoise.

He went on and on for what seemed an interminable distance.

He passed through groves of deep sea vegetation, crawled over reefs, fought off several sharks, and avoided the clutches of an octopus.

Yet the Tortoise came not in view.

He paused at length, weary and in utter despair.

"My God! I am lost—lost at the bottom of the sea!"

The reader of these lines can only faintly conceive the horror of the reflection to the young inventor.

Never in all his life had Frank been called upon to face such an ordeal as this.

It was scant wonder then that his brave young heart was depressed, and an awful wave of horror swept over him.

Lost at the bottom of the Atlantic!

It was an awful thing!

The chemical air generator upon his back could not last forever.

Had he been otherwise amphibian it might not have been so bad, for there was plenty of food to sustain him.

But with the diving helmet on he could not eat. To remove it would have been to welcome death by drowning.

This would inevitably come, if not suffocation, when the chemical air generator should fail to operate.

But Frank was yet resolute.

"I must and will find the Tortoise," he declared, rigidly.

So on he went until suddenly a mighty dark object loomed up before him.

At first it seemed like a mountain, but he speedily found that this was owing to the magnifying propensity of the water.

It was really the hull of a wrecked vessel. The kelp-strewn hulk seemed to Frank for a moment a suggestion of salvation.

But second thought caused the reflection that this sunken hulk could not possibly afford him rescue.

It was water-logged and rotten, having lain maybe a quarter of a century under the waves.

Frank stood at some distance and gazed upon it.

There is something in a wrecked vessel even if seen above the sea which appeals to the inquisitiveness of an observer.

A thousand wondering thoughts are created. Many vague questions arise.

Thus it was with Frank.

"What ship is that?" he mused. "Where did she come from? What was her mission, and what the fate of her crew?"

The more Frank pondered upon these queries the more interested he became.

And, indeed, it seemed not difficult to get a partial solution of the mystery.

The ship was before him, and possibly upon her bow her name was engraved.

Moreover, by going aboard of her there was a chance that he might find evidence there of her mission and the fate of her crew.

Frank adopted the resolution.

He made his way to the hulk and to her bow.

There were great quantities of seaweed hanging over her thwart, but he scraped this aside, and with the aid of the lamp on his helmet, he read:

"Catherine Adams, Boston."

"A trading ship, without a doubt," he muttered. "Ah; little her owners may know of her fate. From appearances she went down in a storm, and with all hands aboard!"

Frank was now deeply interested in the history of the vessel.

He next clambered over the rail and stood upon the deck.

The timbers were rotten and dilapidated, and Frank feared that they might give way under him.

But he trod carefully and reached the mainmast.

Here lashed to a stay was the skeleton of a man.

Passing this, Frank saw another skeleton lashed to the wheel, and he then reached the companionway.

His electric lamp illumined this quite well and he made his way down the shaking stairs.

This brought him into the cabin of the vessel.

The scene that met his gaze was a most affecting one.

There lay, in the center of the cabin floor, a perfect heap of skeletons.

It showed too plainly what had been the fate of the poor wretches who had found passage aboard the Catherine Adams.

Death in a most horrible form had been their fate.

It was an awful thing to contemplate.

With a sickening sensation Frank returned to the deck.

A thrilling surprise was in store for him.

No sooner had he struck the deck than he saw a gleam of light from beyond the rail.

He rushed thither, and a wild thrill of joy seized him.

Two divers were, like himself, inspecting the hulk.

It needed but a glance for him to know that they were Barney and Pomp.

At the same moment the two faithful servitors saw him. Both waved their arms and made joyous gestures.

Frank lost no time in scrambling down from the deck.

Reaching the ocean floor, he rushed toward Barney and Pomp. That was a joyous meeting.

By putting their helmets together they were able to converse.

They recounted their mutual experiences, and Frank said:

"Well, we are united, but scarcely better off than before, unless we can find the Tortoise."

"Begorra, that's thrue," declared Barney.

"What will Captain Bailey think when we all fail to return?"

"Shure, I'm thinkin' it will worry him a bit!" declared Barney.

"You are right," agreed Frank.

"I done sink de bes' fing we can do am to try to find the Tortoise at once," said Pomp.

None cared to dispute the logic of that statement. All agreed upon this point, and it was left to Frank Reade, Jr., to decide which was the proper course to take.

This was a matter not easy to decide.

All strained their vision in vain for some sign of light or anything which would enable them to find the submarine boat.

The situation was truly an appalling one to reflect upon.

They might wander for years, if life would last, before finding the Tortoise.

On the other hand they might come upon the submarine boat in a very short space of time.

It was certainly a precarious situation, and Frank Reade, Jr., felt its full force.

But he murmured an inward prayer and set out at random.

For what seemed an age they wandered aimlessly about in the water.

The pressure upon the helmets was now becoming painful, which was evidence that the supply of air was becoming weaker.

Frank was in a desperate frame of mind.

He knew that something had got to turn up in their favor very soon, or it would mean death in a horrible manner.

He thought of Captain Bailey.

The position of the captain was hardly better than theirs.

He also was buried alive under the fathoms of the Atlantic.

To be sure he was aboard the Tortoise, but he had not the slightest idea of the mechanism of the boat, or how to raise her to the surface.

But in the very midst of their extremity, at the eleventh hour, as it were, Frank hit upon an idea.

He saw a tremendous fish of the shark species sailing leisurely along at right angles to their position.

The monster did not seem to heed their presence.

This fact and the fish's action satisfied Frank that it had scented something more appetizing.

A startling thought flashed over him.

"Can it be the blubber of the whale that the fish scents?" he muttered.

He stood for a moment and saw the shark disappear.

Several other fish of the voracious species came along, and all seemed to be going in the same direction.

Only an acute mind like the young inventor's would have attached any significance whatever to this event.

But Frank saw in it a possible means of salvation, and cried:

"Those fish will lead us to the Tortoise, I will wager."

He motioned to Barney and Pomp to follow him.

Then Frank carefully got his bearings and set out in the direction indicated.

The three lost divers tramped on for some while.

The situation was fast getting desperate. The air in the generators was becoming most foul, and already Pomp's eyes had begun to bulge.

The darky could with difficulty stagger along. Frank saw through the glass in his helmet that Pomp's fate was nigh sealed—that death was hard upon him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PIRATE'S DOOM.

It smote the young inventor's heart with fearful pity and horror as well as the most poignant grief.

He could not bear the thought that Pomp should die.

The darky had been in his service for many years and had always been a faithful and devoted servant.

Frank turned his head away with pain. Pomp fairly staggered along now.

It became evident that he must soon succumb.

But at the very last moment, when it seemed as if hope was really gone, the unexpected happened.

Frank suddenly waved his arms excitedly.

Through the distant gloom there was a peculiar halo. It was certainly the distant illumination from the electric lights of the Tortoise.

Frank was sure of this, and placing his helmet against Barney's, shouted:

"We are saved. Help me to carry Pomp along."

With one on each side of him, the darky hastened along through the water.

Frank's supposition proved correct.

It was the Tortoise and they were close upon it.

In a very few moments the light became intense and the outlines of the boat were plainly seen.

It was like being rescued from a watery grave, like being brought back from the dead, and the joy of the party can hardly be described in words.

But the great question now was as to whether Pomp would survive until the Tortoise was reached or not.

The darky was certainly very far gone. But in the last twenty yards Frank and Barney carried him.

Captain Bailey was at the glass window watching for their coming.

The captain had been intensely worried by their absence and had really fancied that his last hour had come.

As they appeared now, however, he was overcome with joy.

Frank reached the vestibule door and flung it open.

The two rushed in and dragged Pomp after them.

Frank shut the door quickly and then turned the pump valve.

In a few moments the water was out of the chamber and Frank quickly unloosed Pomp's helmet.

The darky had fainted.

But his heart yet beat and Frank knew that he was saved.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "We're back from the grave. Heaven be praised!"

"Begorra, I niver want to go there agin!" declared Barney. "I was niver so near purgatory afore in me loife."

Then he bent down over Pomp.

"Och hone, an' don't yez tell me that the naygur won't be afther livin'!" he cried. "Shure, we must be afther savin' him!"

The young inventor now produced a bottle of brandy.

A few drops between Pomp's lips had a magical effect.

The darky's eyelids rolled, his chest heaved, and in a few moments he breathed regularly. He was far from being a dead negro.

In a few moments he was himself once more.

It is needless to say that all were overjoyed at their escape.

The horror of that dreadful search under water for the Tortoise not one of them would ever forget.

Frank had experienced enough of under-water adventures for one day, and accordingly he opened the lever which expelled the water from the air chambers.

The Tortoise sprang to the surface like a bit of cork.

Once more the submarine boat continued its voyage.

The days passed into a week, and one day Frank said:

"We are upon the equator. In another week we shall reach our destination."

It had been an exceedingly quick trip, all things considered.

The incidents of the voyage had been many and varied.

But nothing of a thrilling nature occurred after the experiences just narrated until the Tortoise reached a point some twenty degrees south of the equator.

Then, one day, as Captain Bailey was in the pilot-house, he saw a white sail to the southward.

The captain brought his glass to bear, and made it out to be a full-rigged ship of the merchant variety.

A moment later he gave a start and an exclamation.

Just to the rear of this vessel he saw a rakish-looking craft.

In an instant the astute captain saw that one craft was virtually giving the other pursuit.

"That's queer," he muttered.

He brought his glass to bear upon the pursuer. This occasioned his deep alarm.

"Thunder and guns!" he ejaculated; "she's a pirate!"

Then he saw a distant puff of smoke leap from the rakish craft's side, and heard the distant boom of a gun.

It was a signal to heave to, as the old captain well knew.

A more excited man than Captain Bailey at that moment could hardly be imagined.

With the most intense feeling he sprang up and cried:

"Mr. Reade, on deck, please. There's a blasted pirate out yonder!"

Frank came up in a jiffy.

"What is that?" he asked.

"A pirate, sir! A blasted Malay, or I'm a sinner!"

Frank was astonished.

"Pirates in these days!" he exclaimed. "Why, I thought their day was over."

"Ah, but there are many of them skulking around here, sir," replied Captain Bailey, excitedly. "They come out from the Ladrões, and when they see a good chance they are only too ready to pounce upon a merchantman."

"Well," said Frank, sententiously, "we'll see about that."

Frank studied the distant craft with his glass.

It needed but little scrutiny to satisfy him that the captain was right.

The merchantman was fast being overhauled. It meant destruction to the fine vessel if overtaken.

The Tortoise lay so low in the water that the Malay undoubtedly had not seen her.

Frank went to the stairway and shouted:

"Barney, set a course due south. Pomp, fetch me up three projectiles for the electric gun."

The electric gun was a weapon of Frank's own invention and was planted upon the upper deck.

It would fire a projectile of dynamite, which at a distance of a mile would reduce to atoms the largest ship.

Barney obeyed, and headed the Tortoise to pass directly between the pirate and the merchant ship.

But the latter could be seen to be heaving to, and the next moment the pirate ran alongside.

Frank was disappointed.

It would be impossible now to use the gun without reducing both ships.

But he sought to send a warning to the pirate, which might cause him to break away.

So he sighted the gun and fired a shot to the right of the two vessels.

The projectile struck the water and lifted it in a straight column to the height of a hundred feet.

It was a terrific exhibition of might.

For the first time both the pirate and the merchant ship saw the submarine boat.

The effect was startling.

The pirate evidently believed the Tortoise to be an iron-clad of the English or American navy.

The pirate tried to break away from its hold upon the merchant ship.

Terror must have seized the Malays, for they set sail to the north with all haste.

Meanwhile, the Tortoise, with the speed of the wind, was bearing down upon the two ships.

A short while later the submarine boat passed under the stern of the merchantman.

Frank went out upon the main deck and hailed the merchantman.

"Ahoy! What ship is that?"

A tall man, evidently the captain, was in the shrouds, and replied through a huge speaking trumpet:

"The ship Priscilla, New York, for the Straits of Magellan and Indian ports."

"Ay, ay," replied Frank. "What ship is that yonder?"

"A pirate who has just broken away from us. Ahoy!"

"Ay, ay."

"What ship are you?"

"The Tortoise, electric submarine diver, Frank Reade, Jr., captain."

Then the Tortoise whisked by and was soon beyond hail.

The decks of the Priscilla showed that the ship had been made ready for a fight, the rails being covered with armed sailors.

The Tortoise went on in pursuit of the pirate.

The Malay was making off at full speed. But she managed to send a shot of defiance at the Tortoise, though.

The shot ricocheted over the waves, and barely missed the Tortoise.

As the latter was not iron-clad, and would be easily sunk by such solid shot, Frank did not care to take any undue risk.

So he sighted the electric gun, and took careful aim at the pirate.

There was a flash, a shock, and the dynamite projectile fled on its way.

It struck the Malay fairly under the thwarts, and the result was terrific.

There was a tremendous upheaval of water and flying debris.

When it settled down, no sign of the pirate ship save a drifting heap of refuge could be seen upon the face of the ocean.

It had been a terrible bolt of destruction which had struck it.

The gang of cut-throats and murderers had met with a fearful and a just fate.

No more would they scour the seas, like a vulture seeking what they might devour. Their end had come.

And in a fitting manner.

Frank Reade, Jr., felt not the least particle of compunction in firing the shot which demolished the pirate ship.

He knew that in a moment he had taken hundreds of lives.

But he felt no worse than the hangman who metes out justice to the brute who has made a practice of slaughtering innocent human beings.

As for Captain Bailey, he was beside himself with delight.

"Hooray!" he cried. "That's the way to treat the scoundrels! They've scuttled the last fine ship they ever will, I reckon!"

"You are right," cried Frank. "If we meet any more of that ilk, we'll treat them the same, if not worse."

The merchant ship went safely on its way.

Frank did not seek closer acquaintance, and kept the Tortoise on her course for Carter's Reef.

The submarine boat now made good progress.

The young inventor estimated that in two days more they would be in the waters which covered the sunken island.

CHAPTER VII.

POMP SQUARES ACCOUNTS.

Barney and Pomp thus far had thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

In fact, the two jolly souls would have a good time even if they were in a morgue. The spirit of fun was predominant in the soul of each.

Barney had played a little trick upon Pomp a few days previous which had made the darky keen to get square with him.

The Celt had managed to entrap a huge and combative crab during a submarine visit.

This creature he smuggled away amid the blankets of Pomp's bunk.

The crab managed to get the darky by the toe when he retired that night. The result was too funny for anything.

Pomp could not imagine what had seized him, and a yell of terror broke from his lips as he leaped out of the bunk.

Then followed a battle royal between the darky and the combative crab.

The darky took hold of the crab with his hands and the crustacean promptly dug its keen nippers into his wrist.

Poor Pomp danced and yelled furiously as the pain increased, and in vain tried to shake his tormentor off.

But that crab meant business, and the way he got in his work showed that he was possessed of ability also.

Over and over upon the cabin floor rolled the darky.

At length in the struggle the crab was dashed with such force against an upright post that it relaxed its hold.

Pomp cleared out of the cabin in double-quick time.

"Fo' massy sakes!" he gasped. "What ebber got dat fing into mah bed? He nigh about killed dis chile!"

The uproar had aroused everybody on board.

Frank and Captain Bailey came tumbling in in deshabille.

"For mercy sakes, what's the matter with you, Pomp?" cried Frank. "What's happened to you?"

"Fo' de lor' sakes, Marse Frank!" gasped the darky.

"Jes' yo' cast yo' eye into dat cabin an' see fo' yo'sef."

Frank and the captain promptly obeyed, and casting their eyes into the place, saw the crab reared upon its claws in a most aggressive manner.

Frank and the captain could not fail to see the ludicrousness of the thing, and nigh burst with laughter.

Barney was on deck keeping watch, but he managed to place one ear at the hatchway.

Unfortunately his risibilities got the best of him and he laughed uproariously.

In a moment Pomp had divined the secret of it all.

"Fo goodness sakes," he muttered, "I done fink it was dat sassy I'ishman. I jes' break his head fo' him."

Up the stairway dashed Pomp and made a dive for Barney.

But the Celt reached the pilot-house and locked himself in.

The darky tried to force the door, but was obliged to content himself with jawing the Celt from the outside.

For this little racket Pomp had it in for Barney.

He was determined to become square with him, cost what it would.

He was shrewd enough, however, not to attempt this at once.

He knew that the Irishman would be upon his guard and would outwit him.

He feigned to forget the affair as a blind. In this he succeeded.

Barney was quite deceived, and the darky's opportunity came.

Pomp laid his wires carefully, and sprang a snap upon Barney that he did not forget for many a day.

Once upon a time Pomp had traveled among his colored brethren in the south as a showman.

His entire show consisted of himself, his banjo, and a magic lantern.

It is said that the magic lantern has a drawing effect upon the colored people that no other attraction possesses.

Let an enterprising darky go into a colored community and hang up a sign announcing that he would torture the town with a magic lantern exhibition, and he will pack the hall.

Pomp would as soon thought of parting with his wooly scalp as with his magic lantern.

It chanced that Barney had never seen it or anything of the sort in his life.

This was of great service to the designing Pomp.

His arrangements were quickly made.

He managed to smuggle the lantern, all prepared for action, into the cabin and secrete it behind Barney's bunk.

It was Pomp's first watch upon deck.

At twelve o'clock Barney was to relieve him. At nine o'clock the Celt went below and turned in.

Pomp took Captain Bailey into his scheme, and the old skipper kindly offered to serve as watch while he was absent from his post.

Barney was snoring beautifully when Pomp crept into the cabin.

The darky chuckled, and crept behind Barney's bunk.

Then Pomp lit the lantern and put in a slide.

It was about the most hideous representation of a hobgoblin that could be imagined.

The likeness of the fiend was skillfully thrown upon the partition close by Barney's side.

There it flickered and quivered, danced and leaped.

Then Pomp leaned over and began to groan dismally in Barney's ear.

The Celt was a sound sleeper, but that groan would have nigh aroused a dead man.

The Celt turned over, muttered something and opened his eyes.

He was face to face with the spectre.

For a moment he did not move, owing, no doubt, to a state of stupidity out of which he was coming.

But the next moment he awoke, and let out a yell of terror that went from one end of the boat to the other.

"Och! Murtha! Murtha! Help! shure, he'll have me. The divil is afther me. Arrah! don't take the poor Irishman's loife, sor, I beg of yez. I'll go wid yez. I'll do anything yez say, but don't take me loife!"

The fiend yet danced, but suddenly vanished. Barney sank back in abject terror.

"Och, hone! if iver I see anything loike that afore!" he muttered in terror. "Shure, the ould Nick is afther ye, Barney O'Shea!"

The words were barely off his lips when another spectre leaped into the room.

This time it was a ghostly, grinning skeleton.

The way it danced up and down the room and over the ceiling was horrible to witness.

And poor Barney was so paralyzed with fear that he could only yell and scream in terror.

Pomp saw that his friend's nerves were getting the best of him and terminated the show.

He managed to slide out of the cabin unseen in the dark.

A moment later Barney came staggering out in dishabille, and bathed with perspiration and shaking with terror.

"Och, worra, worra, me days are numbered!" he groaned. "Shure, the divil has called me this noight. I'd niver have believed it, but I seen it wid me own eyes."

"For goodness sake, Barney, what is the matter with you?" asked Captain Bailey, feigning astonishment.

"Massy sakes alibe!" cried Pomp, innocently. "Am yo' sick, chile?"

This was too much for Barney.

So overwrought were his nerves that he broke down and actually cried.

"Bad cess the day!" he wailed. "Shure, the divil come to me and called me to go wid him!"

"The devil?" exclaimed Captain Bailey, feigning surprise. "Pshaw! what are you talking about?"

"He am drunk, dat's what he am!" put in Pomp.

This fired Barney, and he made a dive at Pomp.

"Bejabers, I'll have the skin av yez fer that!" he cried. "Have at ye, yez black misfit!"

But Pomp was unable to contain himself any longer.

He burst into roars of laughter. Barney thumped and pounded him, but the darky took the blows on his head, and only laughed the louder.

It was the best joke that Pomp had played upon his roguish comrade in many a day.

He had indulged in revenge certainly of the sweetest kind.

The trick had worked far beyond his most sanguine expectations.

But Barney's nerves were getting the better of him to such an extent that Captain Bailey felt that he must interfere.

"Avast there, mate!" he cried, seizing Barney's arm. "Don't fly to pieces. You haven't seen the devil. It was only a trick."

"A thrick, do yez say?" cried Barney. "Shure, yez can't fool me. Didn't I see his Satanic Majesty wid me own eyes?"

"Ah, but it was a trick."

"Divil a thrick, say I."

And the captain had no end of difficulty in quieting Barney down. He could not explain matters to him, for the Celt would not listen.

But Barney finally went off to bed again and slept like a log until time for his watch.

During the next day he went about as sober as a clock.

Pomp was dying with laughter. It was too rich a joke.

And to his dying day Barney would never believe but that his Satanic Majesty had indeed appeared to him that night.

The Tortoise was now near the latitude named in the log of the Thespian.

Captain Bailey had recognized the locality by a number of low-lying reefs which were jotted down upon the maps as Carter's Reef.

"Yonder lay the island," he said, pointing to the southward. "It lies now far below the surface."

"When we are dead over the island," said Frank, "I shall send the Tortoise to the bottom."

"All right," agreed the captain.

The Tortoise moved swiftly through the water.

Suddenly Frank checked speed. The boat stopped and the young inventor cried:

"Look out, all! Close the hatch, Barney!"

The Celt hastened to obey.

The next moment the Tortoise took her deep dive down into the ocean depths.

Down, down she went. It was a thrilling moment to all on board. Not the least excited of any was Captain Bailey.

It looked as if their expedition was about to reach a termination, and whether it would result favorably or not would very soon be determined.

The motion of the Tortoise in going down was not a pleasant one.

It generally made the occupants both sick and dizzy.

Frank looked at the electric pressure register, and saw that already a hundred fathoms were above them.

The effect of the pressure was at once evident.

The boat experienced a jarring sensation, and there was a peculiar crunching, grinding sound, as if the steel sides were being subjected to great strain.

And indeed they were. Down, down went the boat until Frank exclaimed:

"My God! We are two thousand feet below the surface. If we go much deeper we shall be crushed like an egg shell!"

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPLORING THE SUNKEN ISLAND.

But just at that moment the submarine boat came to a stop.

Frank pulled the steel shutters from the plate glass windows, and shot the searchlight's glare out into the depths.

The effect was wonderful.

The Tortoise had settled down upon a shelf of rock in the verge of a mighty forest of trees.

There were palms and pines and oaks in profusion, with foliage and clinging vines, but all coated with a crystal white deposit.

It looked like fairyland.

Fishes of all colors of the rainbow swam in and out among the trees, and there were beautiful paths and nooks and grottoes far beyond the most vivid of imaginations.

The voyagers gazed upon the scene spellbound.

"Upon my word!" cried Frank Reade, Jr., "did any of you ever see the like of that?"

"Never!" cried Captain Bailey, excitedly. "It beats the world!"

"Begorra, it's foine!" cried Barney. "Shure, I wouldn't moind livin' in a foine place like that!"

"Golly! I done fink yo' would drown yo'se'f, I'ish!" said Pomp, solemnly.

"Arrah, ye naygur, an' if I'd drown so wud ye! Shure, if ye was to go out there in that white place, the contrast wud be so great that it wud scare the fishes!"

"Does yo' mean to insult me, chile?"

"Begorra, I cudn't do that!"

Pomp made a dive for Barney.

They would doubtless have had a lively wrestle then and there, but Frank Reade, Jr., interposed.

"There is no time for joking," he said. "There is work for all of us."

Frank then turned to the captain.

"Have you any idea upon what part of the island the treasure cave is located?" he asked.

"Not the slightest," replied the captain.

Here was something of which the voyagers had not once thought.

Frank was overwhelmed with the sudden thought, and sank into a chair.

"Upon my word," he gasped, "it is queer that we never thought of that."

The mere sinking of the island had very likely closed the cavern; if not, the accumulation of debris. To attempt to find the spot without any clew whatever as to its locality was what looked to be a stupendous task.

"Well, upon my word," Frank said, finally, "I would not have believed it possible to overlook that point."

"But we did," said Captain Bailey.

"That is true enough."

"And here we are."

"Of course the best thing we can do is to make the attempt."

When it was remembered that the castaway had been long upon the atoll before he had discovered the cave, the treasure hunters in a measure realized the difficulty of their task.

But Frank Reade, Jr., was not the one to yield to defeat. He had come all this vast distance to recover the treasure, and he was determined to do it, if such a thing was possible.

Accordingly he made preparations with that end in view.

The diving-suits were brought out, and Frank and Barney put them on.

It was arranged that Pomp and the captain should stay aboard the Tortoise.

"I will let all you younger fellows have all the fun," said the captain, bluffly. "I am too old by far to stir around in so lively a fashion."

Frank had constructed suits especially designed for this sort of pressure, and he believed it would be safe to venture out in them.

The helmets were of double thickness, and the pressure in the air reservoir of double force.

Entering the vestibule, the two daring explorers started out.

They were destined to experience most thrilling adventures before returning.

In a few moments the vestibule was filled with water, and then Frank opened the outer door and walked out.

For a moment he was obliged to wait and accustom himself to the increased pressure.

But this he gradually overcame.

Then both walked out into the crystal forest.

It was a beautiful scene which was spread before their gaze.

To all appearances the island had not changed materially.

The white crystals which had seemed to exercise the preserving influence over the foliage even was undoubtedly a peculiar form of salt.

By breaking away the white incrustations from the trunk of a tree Frank found that the wood was yet wonderfully well preserved.

The radiance from the electric searchlight of the Tortoise extended for a great distance.

This enabled Frank and Barney to go some ways from the boat with safety.

Upon every hand new and wonderful scenes were revealed to them.

The two divers were charmed and almost spellbound with the scene.

Never in their lives had they seen the like.

It was certain that the island in its natural state must have been a beautiful spot.

But now that it was transformed with the crystallization, it was a veritable wonderland.

For some ways they wandered on, and Frank began to wonder what part of the island had been the castaway's home.

Thus far he had seen nothing which would indicate that human beings had ever inhabited the island.

But suddenly Barney turned and made an excited gesture. In a moment Frank was by his side.

They put their helmets together and Barney shouted:

"Shure, Mither Frank, wud yez cast yer eye over yender

forninst that big tree. If I'm not mistaken there's a small hut there."

Frank did as requested.

He saw what looked like the shadowy outlines of a hut. At once his interest was aroused.

It was just beyond the range of light from the searchlight of the Tortoise.

The young inventor did not hesitate to take the risk of exploration, however.

He started forward eagerly.

Barney followed him.

But just as they drew nearer to the hut a thrilling thing occurred.

There was a sudden commotion, a sound like reverberating thunder, and Frank looked up just in time to see that one of the huge trees was falling.

He was out of range of it himself, but it was falling directly upon Barney.

There was no time to lose.

Frank put out his hand and grasped Barney's arm.

He meant to pull the Celt away from the deadly danger.

But he was just too late.

The tree fell with a mighty crash, and one of its branches pinioned the unfortunate Celt to the bottom of the ocean.

It did not crush him, fortunately, nor penetrate his diving-suit.

This was fortunate indeed.

It held him down, however, as if in a vise. In vain Frank tried to extricate him.

The young inventor had been convulsed with horror.

At the moment he had faithfully believed that Barney's fate was sealed. It did not seem possible to him that the Celt could be saved.

He was confident that the Irishman's armor would be pierced and he would strangle to death.

But fortunately this did not prove to be the case.

The branch of the tree held him down firmly.

He could not extricate himself. For a moment Frank was in a quandary.

Then it occurred to him as a simple matter after all to release his friend.

He had a good sharp ax in his girdle, and drawing this he began to deal heavy blows upon the limb.

The chips flew beneath the sturdy blows, and Barney seemed likely to be quickly released when a startling thing happened.

Suddenly from the gloom of the forest there crept forth a monster, the like of which Frank had never seen before.

It was a fierce monster, half crab, half octopus, with voracious jaws and long, talon-like claws.

Its glaring green eyes were fixed upon the two divers.

Evidently it regarded them as an appetizing morsel, and intended to snatch them up.

Frank stood aghast for a moment at sight of the monster.

Barney saw it coming also, and made frightened signs to Frank.

Still on came the creature.

Frank saw that he could never hope to release Barney in time. There was seemingly no way but to give battle to the creature, or give Barney up to its claws.

Frank could easily have made good his own escape. But he would have been compelled to leave Barney, and he would have suffered death before he would have done this.

So he raised his ax threateningly and started for the monster.

The creature did not seem to know what fear was.

It came on the faster, and thrusting forth one long claw caught Frank by the waist.

The ax descended upon the claw with sufficient force to have severed the ordinary substance.

But the ax blade turned from it as if from flint, and with horror Frank saw that the creature was provided with a natural coat of mail which was almost equivalent to steel.

The ax would make no impression upon it.

And the strength of that claw was almost hereulean.

Frank felt that he was a child in that grasp.

The creature drew him toward those awful jaws with avidity.

If they once closed upon him his fate would be sealed.

Never had the young inventor been in so precarious a position. Never had he been nearer death.

"My God!" he groaned. "I am lost—this is death."

But he made one tremendous effort to release himself from that claw.

He failed. But raising the ax high he made a blow at those horrid jaws.

Crash!

The ax dashed in several of the lance-like teeth and partly severed the jaw. Blow after blow the young inventor rained upon the creature's head.

At the jaw he dashed the ax again and again, until that member hung useless and half severed.

One of the huge eyes was disgorged, and blood filled the water in great volumes.

The monster writhed and fought in pain, and Frank felt the clutch of that deadly claw relaxing.

Realizing that upon it depended his life and Barney's, he fought madly.

He was now clear of the creature's embrace. It was a

glorious victory, and filled with joy he turned to effect Barney's rescue.

But to his horror he beheld a new and more appalling peril than the one he had just averted.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SEA FIGHT.

A new foe, more powerful and horrible than the one he had just worsted, appeared upon the scene.

At first Frank thought he was face to face with the sea serpent whom people had been apt to regard as a fable.

It was a monster fish of the eel species, and fully fifty feet in length.

Its snake-like body came writhing through the forest, and its capacious gullet was wide open with the intention of swallowing up Barney.

The eel had a hideous head, with jaws set with horrible teeth. He was a literal monster, and much larger than the largest of boa-constrictors.

Frank was for a moment almost paralyzed with horror.

Here was a new and wholly unlooked-for danger.

Was the ocean full of such creatures? If so, he might as well at once abandon his purpose of exploring the sunken island.

Barney, in the meanwhile, had been making frantic efforts to free himself.

He had the free use of his arms, and with his ax had been at work upon the refractory limb of the tree himself.

In fact, he had nearly severed it when this new peril came.

It was of no use for him to shout to Frank, for the young inventor could not have heard him.

There seemed but one way, and this was to give battle to the monster himself.

So he lifted his ax and waited for the creature's approach.

But before it could reach him Frank had attacked it.

He aimed a blow at the eel's neck, and it struck just back of the gills. In an instant a great jet of blood leaped.

What happened immediately afterward was all chaos to Frank Reade, Jr.

The pain of the blow doubtless threw the monster into convulsions. There was a terrific crashing of branches, a thundering series of sounds, and Frank felt himself hurled end over end.

He was for a moment stunned, but picking himself up, he looked about him.

The water was so dull and clouded that for a time he could distinguish nothing. Then he saw Barney standing before him.

In a moment the Celt rushed into his arms and cried:

"Och hone, Misther Frank, it's glad I am to see yez. Shure, I thought yez kilt intirely."

Frank put his helmet closer and shouted:

"But how in the world did you get free, Barney?"

"Shure, sor, that big snake snapped the tree with its weight and let me up. Tare an' 'ounds, how the omadhoun did squirm affther yer basted him wid the ax!"

"Where is the monster now?"

"Shure, sor, I've not the slightest idea, but I'm thinkin' he's gone home fer to git a poultice on his jaw."

Frank laughed at this.

Both could well afford to feel happy, for their escape from death had been most marvelous.

But the two monsters of the deep had been repulsed, and the coast was clear.

Of course there was a possibility of coming across more of the same kind, but Frank did not fear it.

Now that the danger was over, their courage returned quickly.

Frank started forward to examine the hut.

He reached the door and put his head in. The electric lamp on his helmet partly illumined the interior.

A number of little fish scampered out through the windows, seemingly terrified at the intrusion.

The interior of the cabin proved at once that it had been certainly the island home of the castaway.

It was practically in the same condition in which he had left it so many years before.

In the center of the floor was a table made of pieces of cane deftly put together. Several chairs as cleverly fashioned were about the room.

There was a bunk against the wall, in which there were yet a few shreds of rotted cloth.

The walls were hung with trophies of the chase, sea-shells of gorgeous hues and the shells of turtles.

In all appointments the cabin was plainly the island home of a man cast away for years.

Many little articles were scattered about which we will not pause to enumerate.

Frank and Barney entered the hut and looked about them with much interest and curiosity.

Beyond the hut Frank saw a broad path leading away, as he imagined, to the shore.

He was desirous of following it, but realized that this would be risky.

They were now far beyond the range of light from the Tortoise.

They knew well from former experience what it meant to be lost at the bottom of the ocean.

There was no desire on the part of either to repeat that experience.

Barney put his helmet close to Frank's.

"Phwat shall we do, Misther Frank?"

"Return to the Tortoise," replied Frank.

"All roight, sor."

The Celt seemed eager to return, and led the way.

Frank's plans were quickly made.

He would change the position of the Tortoise, travel to some other part of the island and make a search for the treasure cave.

Accordingly the two divers made their way back to the boat.

As they approached, Captain Bailey could be seen at the big window beckoning excitedly to them.

Frank was surprised.

"What's up?" he muttered. "What does he want?"

However, the young inventor quickly climbed into the vestibule, followed by Barney.

The water was quickly pumped out, and removing their suits the two divers entered the cabin.

Captain Bailey rushed up to Frank in great excitement.

"Great barnacles! I'm glad you have come back!" he cried.

"Eh!" exclaimed Frank. "What is the matter?"

"Something is going on up above us."

"What do you mean?"

"Listen!"

Now that his helmet was off, Frank could hear plainly. To his hearing there came distinctly the distant boom of a gun.

He exchanged startling glances with the captain.

"I tell you something is going on up there!" declared the old skipper.

"Upon my word, I believe you're right," declared Frank, "but what is it?"

"It sounds like a sea fight."

"Well, we'll soon find out."

"What, are you going up?"

"Certainly."

Frank sprang to the pilot-house and reversed the lever which expelled the water from the air-chamber.

The Tortoise shot upward.

Up, up she went like a cork.

A few moments later she popped into the air. All rushed to the window and took a sweeping look at the sea.

They were rewarded with a startling spectacle. Two ships lay to windward.

One appeared to be a trading vessel, though she was more than ordinarily rakish in her build.

The other was a Malay pirate.

The trader carried a couple of cannon and had bravely resisted the attack made upon her by the pirate.

Indeed a good-sized sea fight was in progress, and the voyagers on board the Tortoise watched it with interest.

"Great barnacles!" cried Captain Bailey, with great excitement, "I'll bet the trader will lick the black flag yet. See 'em go it."

Indeed, the trader did seem to be holding its own.

The pirate seemed to be trying to bring the other ship close quarters.

But the captain of the trader evidently understood this well, for he kept his distance.

Had the pirate been able to bring the fight to close quarters, the trader would have been whipped quickly enough.

It was a thrilling sight, as witnessed from the deck of the Tortoise.

Frank did not intend to interfere until he saw that the trader was getting the worst of it.

The cannon-balls flew fast and furious, but the Tortoise being out of range had nothing to fear.

At length the pirate ceased firing and bore directly down on the trader.

It was evidently his intention to bring the battle to close quarters or make the trader run away.

In the latter case the pirate would quickly overhaul its prey and be able to actually close with her.

"Stand your ground, my hearty!" cried Captain Bailey, excitedly. "I hope they won't be so foolish as to be hoodwinked like that."

"I reckon not," said Frank. "It is my belief that the skipper of that craft knows what he is about."

"By crackey! I agree with you!" admitted Captain Bailey. "He is following just the right tactics."

The trader kept broadside on to the pirate vessel, and worked her guns to the utmost.

This was with most telling effect, too, for the pirate's foremast suddenly went by the board.

Then a great cry went up from the excited Captain Bailey.

"Bully for the trader!" he roared. "See, the black flag struck!"

This was true.

The pirate's death-head emblem came down with a run.

The trader ceased firing.

Boats began to put out from the pirate ship with the evident intention of making for the trader.

"Thunder and blazes!" cried Captain Bailey. "I hope the skipper ain't fool enough to take 'em aboard. That would never do."

"Not much," retorted Frank. "I tell you that skipper is all right."

"Marse Frank," cried Pomp, "I jes' lak fo' to gib dat pirate a shot wif mah gun!"

"No," replied Frank; "that would be useless slaughter. Their position is bad enough as it is. Mighty few of them will live to see land again."

This was true enough.

The pirate vessel was sinking, and the crazed crew were getting adrift in the boats. A rough sea was coming up, and the boats could not hope to live a great while.

It looked as if the crew were doomed to a fearful death.

The trader in the meanwhile was making off to the southward.

She was now within hailing distance of the Tortoise, and for the first time saw the submarine boat.

Immediately from the trader's deck came the hail:

"Ahoy! What craft is that?"

Frank made prompt reply:

"The Tortoise, submarine boat, Frank Reade, Jr., master."

"What are you doing here?"

"Looking for the sunken island."

This reply seemed to astonish the captain of the trader, for he brought his vessel about.

"What sunken island?" he asked.

"You are directly over it now," said Frank. "What ship is that?"

CHAPTER X.

IN THE TREASURE CAVE.

"The Maggie May, New Orleans for Sydney," was the reply. "Captain Artemus Bunce, master."

A great cry broke from Captain Bailey's lips.

"Thunder and guns!" he cried. "Is that you, Arty Bunce? I reckon we used to mate once, twenty-eight years ago!"

The Maggie was now so near to the Tortoise that the two skippers could see each other.

The captain of the trader at once bawled out in reply

"Dang my dead-lights! if it ain't Jim Bailey! How are ye, Jim?"

"Lively! How are you?"

"On deck and cleared for action!"

"I see you are, by the way you settled that Malay."

"Oh, I don't travel these waters nowadays without a little hot shot for just such fellows as that!"

"That is where you are right. I glory in your victory."

"But I say!"

"Ahoy!"

"What sort of a craft is that? Not a torpedo boat?"

"You bet not!" replied Captain Bailey; "this is the most wonderful invention on record. It is Frank Reade, Jr.'s submarine boat, the Tortoise."

"Submarine boat?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I see; sails under or over water."

"Yes."

"Wait a bit. I want to come aboard."

"All right."

Captain Bailey turned to Frank.

"I am sure you will like Captain Bunce," he said. "I would like to have him see the Tortoise."

"Certainly," replied Frank. "I will be glad to meet him."

In a few moments a boat lowered from the trader came alongside.

Captain Bunce, a hearty, good humored old salt, leaped aboard.

He was quickly introduced to Frank by Captain Bailey.

Then explanations followed.

"So that's your cruise, eh?" exclaimed Bunce, heartily.

"Ye're lookin' for the sunken island. Well, I hope ye'll have success. It's a likely craft ye have here."

"Allow me to show you over the Tortoise," said Frank, politely. "I will be much pleased to do so."

"And I am much pleased to accept the honor," said Captain Bunce.

Frank led his visitor into the cabin.

Then he proceeded to show him over the vessel.

Captain Bunce was astonished at the clever mechanism which he witnessed.

"And run by electricity!" he muttered. "Well, I'll be blowed. It beats anything I ever heard of!"

"You bet it does, Arty," said Captain Bailey, enthusiastically. "And I consider myself lucky to be taking a cruise in her."

"Well, I should say so. Then you just come to show the way, Jim?"

"That is all."

"Indeed," said Frank, "Captain Bailey's services are most indispensable."

"Well, Mr. Reade," said Captain Bunce, in leaving, "will invite you aboard my ship."

"I will beg your indulgence this time," replied Frank politely. "I have much to do and my time is limited."

"Then I hope to see you in an American port."

"Your wish is mine."

"Thank you. Farewell."

Captain Bunce returned to his ship.

A moment later the Maggie fired a salute of three guns.

Frank sprang to the dynamite gun and placed in it a projectile.

There was a shock and a peculiar whistle; then a remarkable sight was witnessed.

Barely one hundred yards away the dynamite projectile struck the water.

In an instant a mighty column was raised fully one hundred feet high. It was for a moment like a mighty roaring cataract.

The Tortoise had fired its unique salute.

There had been no noise of cannon or explosion of powder, but the demonstration was far beyond that of the Maggie and her guns.

The Maggie now sailed away, with her crew in the shrouds watching the wonderful submarine boat.

Not a sign was to be seen of the pirate ship now.

It had sunk beneath the waves never to be seen again above them.

Many of the villainous crew had gone down with her.

Others were vainly endeavoring to make their escape in the small boats.

Frank went into the cabin and said to Barney and Pom

"Close the hatches tightly. I am going to let the boat go down."

The two faithful servitors hastened to obey the command.

A few moments later Frank turned the lever which let the water into the tanks, and the Tortoise took a plunge beneath the surface.

Down she went, until Frank, in the pilot-house, throwing the searchlight's rays downward, saw the bottom of the ocean.

This time they rested upon a small mound of rock and sand.

From this the searchlight was enabled to penetrate a greater distance about the boat.

Frank turned the searchlight's rays in every direction to see what objects were about.

This satisfied him that they were upon the inner shore of the atoll.

This did not suit him. It was not the most desirable positions.

The cave could not be in this locality, he reflected. It would more likely be found upon the rocky coast. This decided Frank to change the position of the submarine boat.

Indeed, it occurred to him to take a sort of under-water cruise about the island.

With his mind made up to this he went into the pilot-house.

In a few moments the Tortoise was lifted a few feet from the bed of the sea and began to glide gently forward.

In this way Frank sent the boat along on the tour of inspection.

He kept the flashlight at work in every direction. Every look or grotto was closely scrutinized.

Soon the boat began to approach a line of cliffs. This was undoubtedly one shore of the island.

Frank felt sure that if the cave was in existence, it was to be found in this locality.

So he selected a suitable spot and brought the Tortoise to a stop.

"Here we will rest," he declared. "Now to find the cave."

"Bejabers, I'm wid yez!" cried Barney, with alacrity.

The Irishman quickly brought out the diving suits. It required but a few moments for them to don them.

"Golly, I'ish," cried Pomp, "if yo' don' fin' dat cave dis me, I tole yo' dis chile am gwine to look fo' it."

"Begorra, ye kin, an' welcome!" cried Barney. "Share. Barney O'Shea can't find it thin there's no nade av sich s ye lukin'."

"Huh!" sniffed Pomp, "don' yo' fink yo' is smaht?"

"I'm jest as smart as yez ony toime, naygur, an' a bit more so."

"Yo' am a big stuff!"

"An' yez are a monkey!"

This made Pomp mad, and he made a whack at Barney. But the Celt sprang into the vestibule with Frank.

The door was shut, and the water began to enter.

In a few moments the place was full. Frank opened the outside door.

The ocean depths lay before them. Frank took the precaution this time to make sure that no huge monsters of the deep were lurking about ready to pounce upon them.

The coast seemed clear, and the two explorers set out confidently.

The searchlight was set with full glare along the face of the cliffs.

Frank led the way along these.

Suddenly he paused with an exclamation.

There was a narrow aperture in the wall of the cliff, which looked as if it might be the entrance to a cavern.

The young inventor did not hesitate.

He pushed his way into the place.

The light from his helmet illuminated it sufficiently to enable him to see what sort of a place it was.

A narrow passageway, it looked, as far as the vision could go.

This he followed for some ways, when suddenly it turned to the right.

Here it seemed to terminate in a wall of rock.

Had Frank not been in quest of anything, he would have been satisfied at once that the cavern went no further.

But as it was, he was far from satisfied. He examined the wall a moment and gave a start of surprise.

The seemingly blank wall was a large slab of slate, so placed as to bar the entire size of the cavern.

It was but a moment's work to displace it.

Then he passed into a square, vault-like chamber which looked as if it had been made by human hands.

There was little doubt of that, as the marks of the drill were plainly visible in the walls of the chamber.

But the contents of the cavern in the sunken island was what claimed Frank's earnest attention.

They were of a nature to at once excite his keenest interest.

In a heap upon the floor there were silver flagons, plate and other articles.

Of course their lustre was gone, and they were, in a measure, corroded by the water.

But they were plainly distinguishable as silver, just the same.

Against the wall there stood a number of moldering chests.

They were iron bound, and seemed of very ancient manufacture.

But Frank struck the nearest with his ax.

It fell apart.

The young inventor had been prepared for a wonderful sight.

He had fancied that gold in heaps would roll out upon the stone floor.

But to his amazement that did not prove to be the case.

The chest was empty.

A sudden, startling thought came to him. Had some one visited the cave before the island sank, and had they removed the treasure?

It was a greusome and unpleasant reflection. Frank would not entertain it, and made another blow at a second chest.

This one parted, and the young inventor's gaze was rewarded with a most wonderful sight.

Out upon the stone floor rolled great quantities of gold coins. Spanish doubloons of gold and pistoreens of silver were there.

Certainly a fortune was contained in that one chest.

Frank, with a blow of his ax, broke the next.

More coins rolled out. A third chest held sword hilts and various baubles, all evidently of gold.

A fourth, smaller than the others, contained jewels and many precious stones.

Frank knelt down and examined the vast treasure before him.

A million dollars would not begin to estimate its real value. The young inventor picked up several large diamonds and placed them in a pocket of his diving-suit.

"I'll go back and get Barney," he thought; "then we'll return and fix some way in which to get this treasure aboard the Tortoise."

He had barely made this resolution and risen to his feet, however, when a startling thing happened.

There was a sudden shock, a dull, rumbling, and a trembling of the ground.

It was as if there had been a slight earthquake shock.

The young inventor was puzzled.

"That is queer," he muttered. "What does it mean?"

But as he started to leave the cavern a horrible explanation was accorded him.

The outer cavern had literally fallen in and closed up. He was shut in by tons of rock a prisoner in the treasure cave.

As the awful realization dawned fully upon him, it seemed as if his brain would turn and he would go stark, raving mad.

CHAPTER XI.

BARNEY HAS A HARD TIME.

Barney, left outside, had been not a little worried at the absence of his master.

He had not seen Frank enter the cavern, and did not know of its existence.

"Begorra, it's mighty funny phwere Misther Frank went to," he muttered. "I don't loike it at all, at all!"

In vain he searched the vicinity.

Then he sat down upon a rock.

"Faix, I'll wait here until he comes back," he muttered. "It'll not be for long, I'm shure."

But he had barely seated himself when there came a sudden dull rumbling sound and a peculiar tremor.

Barney sprang up.

"Bejabers, phwat the divil does that mean?" he exclaimed, in genuine alarm. "Shure, was it an earthquake?"

The Celt was now much worried about Frank.

"Phwy don't he come back?" he muttered. "Shure, it's a fool yez are, Barney O'Shea, not to have kept him in your eye."

With this Barney renewed his quest for Frank.

But he could find no trace of him.

What was more, the light of the Tortoise had suddenly and mysteriously vanished. The Celt was seized with terror.

Certainly affairs were in a startling and inexplicable state.

In vain Barney tried to locate the submarine boat.

He felt that he was lost.

All was darkness beyond the range of the small lamp in his helmet.

He could not see any way out of the terrible scrape he was in.

Time passed slowly.

Finally Barney became calmer.

He realized that nothing was to be gained by sitting down and giving up to useless reflections upon his fate.

So he arose to his feet and wandered about aimlessly, looking in vain for some sign of the lights of the Tortoise.

What had become of the submarine boat, anyway?

This was a question not easily answered. Barney was wholly lost.

In this state of mind he gave up hope.

He wandered on aimlessly.

How long this sort of thing continued he never knew. But suddenly a horrible sight burst upon his vision.

Upon the bed of the sea lay a ghastly corpse. Above it there hovered a swarm of fish.

For an instant a horrible fear had seized the Celt, that might be the remains of Frank Reade, Jr.

But a second glance showed him that the dead man did not wear a diving-suit.

Moreover, his skin was dark and his dress of the Marine pattern. He was one of the pirates from the wrecked ship.

Barney stood contemplatively over the unfortunate fellow.

Barney had hardly turned away from this ghastly evidence of the sea fight when he came to another.

Within a radius of fifty feet he discovered fully a dozen bodies.

There were very likely a hundred scattered about in various localities, for few of the gang had likely escaped.

The Celt passed on and suddenly caught sight of an object distant in the gloom which caused his heart to leap.

At first he thought it the Tortoise with her lights out.

But the next moment he saw the error of his supposition. It was the hull of a sunken ship.

As he drew nearer it appeared to be the pirate vessel.

The craft lay upon her side, and in such a position that Barney could walk from the ocean bed into one of her open ports.

As he did so a thrilling sight met his gaze.

A scene which spoke louder than words and told of an awful tragedy was before him. Barney's whole soul was moved.

He was in the richly furnished cabin of the pirate ship. There by the door, just as death had overtaken them, were two human forms.

One was that of a young girl of rare beauty and with manacles upon her fair wrists and a look of agony upon her face such as Barney had never seen the likes of.

With one hand still fastened with a death clutch upon the knob of the cabin door, and half reclining against the partition where death had overtaken him, was a powerful-framed man.

The story was plainly to be read.

The young girl was a prize captured from some ship which had fallen a prey to the pirate.

She had been kept a prisoner, perhaps for ransom, aboard the pirate ship.

The captain, seeing that the ship was sure to be sunk by the trader, rushed to the cabin to drag forth his fair prisoner, thinking that the sight of her would cause the crew of the trader to yield to pity and mercy.

No doubt it would, but death had intervened before either could leave the cabin or reach the deck.

Barney gazed upon the scene with a sensation most indescribable.

He finally shuddered and turned away.

"Begorra, I niver want to see the loikes av that again!" he muttered. "Poor crayther! If only Misther Frank had known of her being aboard he would have right soon saved her."

But it was too late now.

Barney turned away and began to take a look about the ship.

All was a scene of riot and confusion.

Many dead bodies lay about, and things were generally turned upside down.

An idea occurred to the Celt.

This being a pirate ship, it was not unreasonable to suppose that there might be large booty aboard.

For a moment, in the interest he felt, Barney forgot his position or the peril that he was in.

The love of discovery is a powerful one in the human composition. More especially is this true if the discovery be a treasure trove.

So Barney at once began to ransack the ship.

He went aft only to find the quarters of the crew and a motley aggregation of odds and ends.

In the cabin there was nothing of value. But going forward, Barney found a sealed door next to the powder-room.

"Begorra!" muttered the Celt, "I'm affther believing that's it in there I'll foind the shining gold I'm looking for."

Barney tried to force the door.

But it would not yield.

There was a heavy lock upon it, and the Celt spent some time in thinking how he could force it.

The door was of most solid oak, and it would no doubt require a great deal of time to cut a way through it.

A happier idea struck Barney.

Back to the cabin he went.

The pirate captain lay yet against the partition. Barney made a move toward him.

Then he paused.

"Be me sowl, I believe the omadhoun has the key av that room in his pocket. Shure, he's the captain av the ship."

Barney's surmise was a good one.

But it was quite another thing to secure the key.

Ordinarily the Celt had no fear of a corpse.

But a corpse under water is a gruesome object to tackle. The pirate's eyes were wide open and staring at Barney.

Every movement of the water swayed his form to and fro. This was a most uncanny proceeding to watch.

For some time Barney hesitated to approach the dead pirate.

Then he mustered up courage.

Advancing, he caught hold of the corpse and endeavored to pull it toward him. He more than succeeded.

The dead pirate made a savage dive toward him.

So life-like was it that Barney let out a wild yell and bolted from the cabin.

To his horror the captain followed him. Borne in on the current, the corpse overtook him in the inner cabin.

Brought to bay Barney's Irish grit was aroused.

"Shure, it's a fool that can't whip a dead man!" he spluttered. "Have at yez!"

He grasped the pirate captain by the throat and held him off at arm's length. Then, with his free hand, he went through his pockets.

He was rewarded with success.

A bunch of keys was found.

Barney felt sure that one of these must fit the door to the treasure-room. He seized a bit of rope and lashed the dead pirate to the stairway, so that he would not follow him about.

Then Barney went to the door of the treasure-room.

He tried a dozen keys before he found the right one. At length the lock shot back and the door opened.

Barney entered the room.

By the light upon his helmet it was illumined, and he saw a wonderful sight.

Gold and silver plate, coins, jewelry and articles of value were heaped in a pile. The Celt looked at this exhibition of wealth spellbound.

That in these modern times a pirate's treasure should be found seemed incredible. Yet Barney knelt and passed his fingers through a pile of shining yellow U. S. double eagles.

Some treasure-laden ship had passed into the clutches of the pirate, and these gold eagles were the booty.

"Be me sowl!" exclaimed the Irishman. "Phwativer wud Misther Frank say to this? Shure, there's treasure enough here to let alone lookin' for the cave on the sunken island."

Barney was right, but a chilling thought struck him.

"Och hone, an' phwat good is it at all?" he wailed. "Shure, I'll niver see Misther Frank again to tell him av it."

It was certainly a terrible reflection.

Sick at heart the Celt arose, and was about to turn away, when a most startling thing happened.

There was a sudden crash and a terrific shock.

Barney was prostrated.

For a moment it seemed as if the ship was going all to pieces.

Something had happened. It seemed as if some heavy object had struck the ship.

Barney regained his feet, and rushing through the cabin, reached the open port by which he had entered.

At that moment a great flood of light shone all around him.

CHAPTER XII.

FRANK'S THRILLING EXPERIENCES.

The human fancy could hardly picture a worse position than that in which we left Frank Reade, Jr.

He believed that by the caving in of the passage he was literally buried alive in the treasure cave.

"God help me!" he moaned. "This is to be my awful end!"

With difficulty he kept from fainting.

Then, in a few moments, he became calmer.

There was certainly some way out of the place. He would not give up without an effort of some kind.

He once more examined the closed passage very carefully.

But there was not even left a crevice by which a mouse could squeeze through.

It would require months to drill his way out by that passage, even if he had the tools and could live that long.

His fate seemed sealed.

Frank turned and his gaze fell upon the treasure trove.

"And it was all for that!" he muttered, bitterly. "And but I am not the first one whom lust for gold has brought to death!"

In his eyes at that moment that pile of treasure was loathsome and hateful.

"It has cost me my life!" he said, bitterly.

How he repented having undertaken the task. Certainly the treasure was accursed.

Awful vague despair settled down upon the young inventor.

He was not a coward, nor in the ordinary way was he afraid of death.

He could have met his fate in battle or in the order of nature calmly.

But to be shut up in this fashion and die like a rat in a trap was something most awful to contemplate.

But in the midst of all his dismal reflections one last resort came to Frank.

He sprang up and began to examine the cavern chamber carefully.

Certainly it was by no means impossible that there might be some other means of exit from the cave.

The thought was father to the hope. He at once began to make a search.

To his intense delight he found that a narrow passage did lead from the opposite end of the chamber.

At times the passage was very narrow, and he was compelled to squeeze his way through.

But he kept on.

Suddenly he saw white objects ahead. In a few moments he came upon one of the most beautiful scenes that it had ever been his fortune to gaze upon.

He was in a cavern, the arches and floor and dome of which was all of the rarest pink, blue and white coral.

It was a veritable fairyland under the sea.

Colored fishes swam about, dainty shells were heaped about, and everything had a delicate, fragile beauty.

In all his life Frank had never seen anything more beautiful.

But hope was now strong in his breast.

There was no doubt but that over these reefs he would succeed in finding his way to the upper surface and bed of the sea.

Frank knew that his friends above must by this time be anxious as to his whereabouts.

As he had anticipated, he very soon came out of the bed proper of the ocean.

His joy could not be expressed.

The question now was to find Barney and the Tortoise.

It was not difficult to find the cliffs and shore once more.

These he followed until he imagined he was near the spot where he had entered the cave.

But the lights of the Tortoise were not to be seen, nor was Barney to be found.

For a time this puzzled Frank.

Then a chilling thought struck him.

Was he lost?

Was he upon some distant part of the island, from whence to find the Tortoise would be an interminable task?

But he pooh-poohed this.

Certainly it could not be so.

The island was not so large but that he should be able to travel all over it in a short space of time.

He kept on for what seemed to him to be hours.

Ever the same line of high cliffs seemed to present themselves and there was no sign of the Tortoise.

Suddenly the young inventor paused.

He was before a high cliff which looked strangely familiar. Suddenly he saw an object in the sand.

Reaching down he picked it up.

It was a knife.

He knew that it belonged to Barney. This was evidence that the Celt had been that way but a short time previous.

Frank looked for his footprints with the hope that he could track him.

But the action of the water had obliterated these.

However, Frank had evidence that he was upon the right track.

He felt certain that this was the spot where he had entered the treasure cave.

With increased hopes, Frank started for the place where he had last seen the Tortoise.

But the lights of the submarine boat were not to be seen. What did it mean?

Then a fearful chill seized him.

"My soul!" he gasped; "have they gone and left me?" It certainly looked that way.

Then he remembered the earthquake, which had been the means of closing the cave.

It was not impossible but that this revulsion had also done great harm to the submarine boat.

In fact, it may have been the means of totally destroying the Tortoise.

Yet he would not abandon hope.

He searched for the spot where the Tortoise had been. He was rewarded with success, for he found the impress of the boat's keel in a patch of mud.

But the Tortoise was gone.

Awful horror now seized upon the young inventor. He knew that there was some good and powerful reason for the departure of the submarine boat.

He could not remain inactive any longer. Something must be done, or his brain would burst.

He started out with the insane hope of finding the Tortoise. On and on he wandered over the ocean bed.

Every moment he was becoming more surely lost, until it seemed almost a living certainty that death would soon overtake him in its most frightful manner.

At length a strange drowsiness came over him.

He selected a bed of seaweed upon a large, flat coral shelf, and lay down. In a few moments he was enwrapped in slumber most profound.

There he lay at the bottom of the mighty South Pacific.

Every moment the air chamber was becoming exhausted, and the pure oxygen absorbed.

As soon as the generator should cease its work he would be sure to suffocate like a rat in a trap.

Nothing seemed at hand to save him. What power could? It seemed truly only that of God.

Slimy eels and horrid crabs crawled over his sleeping form. Yet he did not awake. It seemed a fearful lethargy which was upon him.

Was it the sleep of death?

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END.

But what of the Tortoise?

Left aboard the submarine boat, Pomp and Captain Bailey waited for the return of Frank and Barney.

But time passed rapidly.

They came not, and at length Pomp's fears became aroused.

"Golly sakes!" he exclaimed. "I done fink it am powerful queer whateber hab become ob dese people."

"They will return all right in due time," said the captain.

But a few moments later a startling thing happened. It was so sudden and wholly unlooked for that Pomp and the captain were utterly unprepared for it.

There came a peculiar shock, like the quivering of the atmosphere before an earthquake.

The next moment an explanation was given in a startling manner.

The Tortoise shot up into daylight and the open air. Pomp was in the pilot-house on an investigating tour.

He saw instantly what the trouble was.

The shock of the earthquake had damaged the electrical machinery, broken a switch, and sent the boat to the surface.

Moreover, the whole current was on, and the boat was tearing through the water at a runaway speed most frightful.

The darky's wool rose high up.

"Mah soul!" he gasped. "Just fink ob dat! Whateber will become ob Marse Frank and dat I'ishman down at de bottom ob de ocean. We must stop dis boat some way!"

But how to do it was a question.

With the electrical machinery out of order many complications were presented.

In the first place the matter of finding their way back to the spot where they left Barney and Frank was not the least of all. But to check the speed of the boat was another matter.

The long and short of it was the Tortoise ran ten miles before Pomp had mastered the trouble and repaired it.

Of course a quick return was made.

A spot believed to be right over the sunken island was selected, and the Tortoise was sent down.

But it was upon the bed of the ocean, with no sign of the sunken island anywhere.

The Tortoise was sent ahead under water.

Captain Bailey was in the pilot-house, and kept a good watch out. But the density of the water was such that he did not see a mighty black object ahead until they were almost upon it.

Captain Bailey yelled to Pomp.

But too late.

The Tortoise struck the hull of the pirate ship. Her ram cleared away a section of the bulwarks, but no further harm was done.

This was the shock which Barney had felt while in the cabin.

The light which fell about him as he rushed out was from the searchlight of the Tortoise.

He rushed forward. Pomp saw him, and a few moments later he was safe aboard.

There was a happy meeting. But Frank was yet to find.

The Tortoise went on her quest. Fortune favored searchers.

Carefully the bed of the ocean was swept with the searchlight.

Suddenly the rays were concentrated upon a prostrate form on a shelf of coral.

"Marse Frank!" cried Pomp, wildly. "It am he suah!"

It was indeed the young inventor. Only a seeming miracle had contributed to save his life.

Barney went out and brought Frank aboard. The surprise and joy of the awakened youth can well be imagined.

"Ah," he said, with a deep breath, "that was very near sleep of death. I owe my life to you, dear friends!"

"Golly! I done fink we would hab hunted dese water ober fo' a year but we would hab found yo'," said Pomp.

"Bejabers, ye kin bet on that!" said Barney.

Happy, indeed, was the reunion.

All hope was given up of recovering the treasure in the pirate's cave, but that discovered by Barney aboard the pirate ship was reclaimed.

Then the Tortoise sailed for home. Six weeks later safely entered the river leading to Readestown, and was welcomed by a cheering crowd.

The last trip under water had cooled Frank's ardor somewhat, and he declared:

"I have no desire to undergo such an experience again once. I shall go to work immediately upon a new invention of a different class."

Until the young inventor has perfected this new invention, we will, with the reader's kind permission, take our leave of him for a time.

THE END.

Read "FRANK READE, JR.'S ELECTRIC INVENTION, THE 'WARRIOR'; OR, FIGHTING THE APACHES IN ARIZONA," which will be the next number of the "Frank Reade Weekly Magazine."

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